

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode comprising:

an n-type semiconductor substrate; and

a sequential mesa portion formed on an upper part of
5 the n-type semiconductor substrate, said sequential mesa
portion comprising a plurality of semiconductor layers
which include:

an n-type light absorbing layer,

an n-type electric field relaxation layer formed
10 on an upper part of the n-type light absorbing layer,

a p-type electric field concentration layer
formed on the n-type electric field relaxation layer, and

a p-type multiplying layer formed on an upper
part of the p-type electric field concentration layer and
15 laminated by epitaxial growth,

wherein the p-type electric field concentration layer
and the n-type electric field relaxation layer form a pn
junction,

wherein a carrier density of the n-type electric field
20 relaxation layer is larger than a carrier density of the p-
type electric field concentration layer, and

wherein when light is incident from the n-type
semiconductor substrate toward the n-type light absorbing
layer, electrons and positive holes are generated in the

25 sequential mesa portion and positive holes are a main
carrier, and there is a single-peaked characteristic in
which light-receiving current based on movement of the
electrons and the positive holes is larger at a central
portion of the sequential mesa portion than at a peripheral
30 portion of the sequential mesa portion.

2. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode
according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of
semiconductor layers include an n-type buffer layer formed
between the n-type semiconductor substrate and the n-type
light absorbing layer.

3. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode
according to claim 1, wherein the n-type light absorbing
layer comprises an n⁻-type InGaAs.

4. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode
according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of
semiconductor layers include a p-type contact layer formed
on the p-type multiplying layer.

5. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode
according to claim 4, wherein the p-type contact layer
comprises a p⁺-type InGaAs.

6. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode according to claim 1, wherein the n-type semiconductor substrate comprises an n⁺-type InP.

7. The sequential mesa type avalanche photodiode according to claim 6, wherein the n-type electric field relaxation layer comprises an n⁺-type InP, the p-type electric field concentration layer comprises a p⁻-type InP, and the p-type multiplying layer comprises a p⁻-type InP.